

Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
Assistant Counsel, CBIA
Before the Committee on Labor and Public Employees
Hartford, CT
March 5, 2015

Testifying in opposition to HB 6875 An Act Concerning Criminal Records And Employment Applications

Good afternoon Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, Senator Hwang, Representative Rutigliano and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA opposes HB 6875.

The hiring of a new employee is, more often than not, an extremely expensive process for a business. There are a variety of jobs that state law requires candidates have a clean criminal history. This bill prevents employers from screening ineligible candidates – thus requiring additional time and resources to be spent on candidates that were never legally qualified for the position in the first place. This is another cost on businesses that are attempting to create jobs.

Secondly, a conviction for a misdemeanor, simply because it was "non-violent" in nature, could still be problematic for an employer. For example:

- A candidate that was convicted of misdemeanor theft may not be the most ideal candidate for a position that has access to a valuable merchandise or sensitive data.
- A person convicted of improper possession of a master car key may not be the most ideal hire for a car dealership.
- A person convicted of cruelty to poultry may not be the best candidate for a job as a veterinary technician.
- A person convicted of using a computer network without authorization to alter financial instruments may not be the best person to hire at your IT business.
- A person convicted of permitting prostitution would not be an ideal person to have managing your hotel.

Third, preventing a business from disqualifying a candidate for a job based on their criminal history is cruel to the prospective employee. This bill will result in preliminary job offers being made to a candidate, only to be rescinded as a result of the background check.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to reject HB 6875.